

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 0031

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PDEV MILI XJ CU ET SO AO  
SUBJ: CUBAN HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIAL DISCUSSES AFRICAN ISSUES

REF: HAVANA 0010

1. ON FRINGES OF DECEMBER 31 FIDEL CASTRO RECEPTION FOR CODEL REUSS, USINT OFFICER HAD OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS AFRICAN ISSUES WITH SECRETARY OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OSMANY CIENFUEGOS. ALTHOUGH HE IS A HARD-LINER ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS, CIENFUEGOS WAS FRIENDLY, THOUGH UNBENDING, THROUGHOUT. CIENFUEGOS MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS, WHICH SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH REFTEL REPORT ON CODEL.

2. CASTRO'S DECEMBER 24 PODER POPULAR SPEECH (HAVANA 945 NOTAL) WAS INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN EVENHANDED TOWARD US. BUT USG STATEMENTS ON CUBAN AFRICAN POLICY HAD INFURIATED CASTRO (IMPLICATION WAS CLEARLY THAT HE HAD THUS OVERREACTED EMOTIONALLY.) CUBANS CANNOT ACCEPT "CONDITIONS" ON RELATIONS WITH US, PARTICULARLY ON ISSUES SUCH AS AFRICA THAT DO NOT TOUCH UNITED STATES  
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DIRECTLY. SUCH "CONDITIONS" PLACE CUBANS IN A POSITION OF INEQUALITY SINCE ACTIONS WHICH ARE PERMITTED FOR US-OVERSEAS STATIONING OF TROOPS-ARE PROSCRIBED FOR CUBANS. CUBAN LEADERSHIP IS PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE ON THIS POINT SINCE IT APPEARS TO BE AN EXAMPLE OF US "LOOKING DOWN" ON CUBA. (COMMENT: IN ADDITION TO INEQUALITY THEME, CASTRO IN DECEMBER 24 SPEECH ALSO BROUGHT UP RACISM ISSUE, CLAIMING

THAT HISPANICS IN US ARE "LOOKED DOWN" UPON.)

3. TURNING TO ANGOLA, CIENFUEGOS SAID THAT UNITA, AT PRESENT TIME, DOES NOT REPRESENT SUBSTANTIAL THREAT. PRINCIPAL MISSION OF CUBAN FORCES NOW IS TO TRAIN ANGOLAN ARMY (FAPLA), NOT TO ENGAGE IN OPERATIONS. CUBANS CANNOT GUARANTEE, HOWEVER, THAT CUBAN FORCES' MISSION WILL NOT GIVE GREATER WEIGHT TO COMBAT OPERATIONS AT FUTURE DATE, IF UNITA THREAT INCREASES. FOR THIS REASON, AND DUE TO CONSIDERATIONS OF "PRINCIPLE" (CITED IN PARA 2), CUBANS CANNOT PROVIDE ASSURANCES TO US ON CHANGE IN MISSION OF CUBAN FORCES IN ANGOLA. (COMMENT: CONTRARY TO LATEST USG INFORMATION, TWO RESPONSIBLE CUBAN OFFICIALS - NATIONAL BANK VICE-PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ AND DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTE OF INTERNAL DEMAND RODRIGUEZ BALARI - ASSERTED TO USINT OFFICER, ON SEPARATE OCCASIONS IN LAST WEEK OF DECEMBER, THAT CUBAN FORCES IN ANGOLA ARE NOW RESTRICTING THEMSELVES STRICTLY TO TRAINING FAPLA AND ARE NOT ENGAGING IN OPERATIONS - "A LESSON LEARNED FROM VIETNAM". WHEN USINT OFFICER EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM AND SAID US WOULD WELCOME HEARING ABOUT THIS CHANGE IN MISSION, PERHAPS IN CONNECTION WITH UPCOMING VISIT OF CODEL REUSS, RODRIGUEZ BALARI SAID CASTRO WOULD BE INFORMED OF POSSIBLE, CODEL INTEREST. CIENFUEGOS, ON DECEMBER 31, SAID THAT RODRIGUEZ BALARI MESSAGE HAD BEEN PASSED TO CASTRO. CASTRO, HOWEVER, MADE NO MENTION TO CODEL OF ANY CHANGE IN MISSION, COMPOSITION, OR SIZE OF CUBAN FORCES IN ANGOLA OR ANYWHERE ELSE IN AFRICA.)

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4. NOTE: GRANMA, JANUARY 5, REPORTS NETO JANUARY 4 STATEMENTS TO LUANDA DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN WHICH HE SAYS CUBANS WILL REMAIN IN ANGOLA UNTIL "ANGOLANS ARE CAPABLE OF HANDLING BY THEMSELVES ALONE THE TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT THAT A MODERN ARMY SHOULD HAVE AT ITS DISPOSAL." NETO ALSO COMPLAINS ABOUT INCURSIONS BY TERRORIST BANDS IN SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN BORDER REGIONS. HE ALSO SAYS THAT ZAIRE AIRCRAFT ARE BOMBING UNDEFENDED ANGOLAN CIVILIAN VILLAGES AND SOUTH AFRICAN AIRCRAFT ARE BOMBING VILLAGES IN SOUTHERN CUNENE PROVINCE. END NOTE)

5. ON ETHIOPIA, CIENFUEGOS SAID THAT CUBANS COULD NOT GIVE ASSURANCES THAT THEY WOULD NOT OVERTAKE OGADEN COMBAT ROLE, EVEN IF SOMALIS STOPPED AT HARAR. CIENFUEGOS STATED THAT DANGER OF IRANIAN OR SAUDI ARABIAN INTERVENTION EXISTS AND SAID CUBANS BELIEVE THAT, IN CONTRAST TO ERITREA, "POLITICAL" RATHER THAN "RELIGIOUS SOLIDARITY" MOTIVES ARE PLAYING MAJOR ROLE IN DETERMINING POSTURE OF SUCH OUTSIDE POWERS ON OGADEN ISSUE. (COMMENT: CIENFUEGOS' CRYPTIC

COMMENT MAY INDICATE THAT GOC IMPLICITLY IS DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN ERITREAN AND OGADEN SITUATIONS. ACCEPTING POSITION OF "PROGRESSIVE" ARABS, SUCH AS SYRIA AND IRAQ, WHO SUPPORT ERITREAN SECESSION AND OPPOSING CONSERVATIVE POWERS, SUCH AS IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA, WHO CUBANS CLAIM ARE PROVIDING ARMS TO BACK SOMALI OGADEN THRUST. CUBANS MAY BELIEVE THAT OGADEN INTRUSION - PARTICULARLY IF PENETRATION EXTENDS MUCH BEYOND SOMALI ETHNIC AREA - IS EFFORT AIMED AT OVERTHROW OF MENGISTU REGIME, CASTRO'S REFTEL STATEMENT THAT SUCCESSFUL SOMALI EFFORT TO CUT-OFF ETHIOPIAN ACCESS TO SEA WOULD BE "INTOLERABLE" SUGGESTS THAT CUBANS ARE CONCERNED THAT SOMALIS WILL PUSH BEYOND HARAR TO CUT OFF DJIBOUTI RAIL OUTLET AND THEREBY CHOK OFF ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN  
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COMMERCE.)

6. CIENFUEGOS CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT, DUE TO FACT THAT IT APPEARS THAT THERE IS "GROUP OF PEOPLE AROUND CARTER" WHO WANT TO WAGE "CAMPAIGN" AGAINST CUBAN AFRICAN POLICY, PROCESS OF US-CUBAN NORMALIZATION WOULD BE LONG ONE.

7. COMMENT: CIENFUEGOS' COMPLAINTS ABOUT US POLICY WERE DELIVERED WITH EQUANIMITY, NOT DEFIANCE. CUBANS APPARENTLY HAVE DECIDED TO TAKE LINE THAT, WHILE THEY REMAIN INTERESTED, THERE IS NO RUSH TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH US. CASTRO TOLD CODEL REUSS NORMALIZATION WILL TAKE "TIME, PATIENCE, AND GOOD WILL." CUBANS MAY HOPE THAT WITH PASSAGE OF TIME US WILL BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO POSSIBLY MORE CIVILIAN-ORIENTED CUBAN PRESENCE IN AFRICA. CUBAN SANG-FROID IS PRESUMABLY FORTIFIED BY CONFIDENCE THAT THEY HAVE SECURED, OR WILL SECURE, FAVORABLE ECONOMIC ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE SOVIET UNION FOR 1978 AND PERHAPS, FOR THE 1981-86 PERIOD. ACCESS TO US MARKET THUS WOULD BECOME LESS NECESSARY.  
LANE

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## Message Attributes

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